

INTRODUCING THE EARNED INCOME TAX CREDIT PUBLIC AWARENESS CAMPAIGN

HON. ALCEE L. HASTINGS

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 16, 2003

Mr. HASTINGS of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to introduce the Earned Income Tax Credit Public Awareness Campaign Act.

The Federal Earned Income Tax Credit, or EITC, provides Federal tax deductions for the working poor. In 2001, the Earned Income Tax Credit provided over \$30 billion in tax relief to 18.5 million low-income taxpayers. In fact, the EITC is the second largest program after Medicaid that provides assistance to low-income individuals combating poverty. Data from the U.S. Census Bureau Current Population Survey indicates that in 1999 the EITC assisted 4.7 million people, including 2.6 million children of low-income workers, rise above the poverty line.

However, each year, between 15 and 25 percent of those who are eligible to receive the EITC fail to claim their credit, either because they are unaware of it or cannot obtain the assistance they may need to properly complete the appropriate tax return. Lack of education, language barriers, fear or intimidation, limited financial resources, and unawareness of the credit all contribute to low-income families and individuals not taking advantage of this tax relief. This is a disgrace and a clear disservice to America's working poor.

In south Florida, the number of individuals and families not claiming the EITC is staggering. In Miami-Dade County, FL, alone, it is estimated that more than \$200 million worth of the EITC goes unclaimed annually by about 120,000 low-income families living in the County. At the same time, approximately 85,000 eligible families living in Broward County annually do not claim more than 99 million dollars worth of the EITC.

While Broward and Miami-Dade Counties have each committed themselves to educating taxpayers of the EITC and increasing the number of those claiming it, their resources are limited. Many large cities throughout the country are taking similar efforts to increase the number of taxpayers who are eligible to claim the EITC actually claiming the credit, but as is the case with Broward and Miami-Dade Counties, limited man-power and insufficient financial resources are road blocks to expanded outreach and ultimate increases in the number of those claiming the credit.

The Earned Income Tax Credit Public Awareness Campaign Act establishes a national campaign to raise awareness and increase education about the EITC. Housed in the Internal Revenue Service, the campaign will target low-income individuals, students, single parents, limited English speaking individuals, transient workers, and military personnel, all of whom are statistically the most likely to qualify for the EITC. The bill requires that the campaign contain an education component, as well as an awareness program.

Additionally, my bill establishes a national grant program that states can participate in to conduct their own statewide EITC public awareness campaigns. To receive a grant, a state is required to provide matching funds.

The bill authorizes \$15 million annually for the next 10 years to implement the program, and between 25 percent and 50 percent of the funds appropriated are required to be spent on the state grant program.

The IRS has long criticized Americans who claim the EITC but are not actually eligible to receive the credit. The agency's recent announcement to audit nearly 4 million of the 19 million individuals and families who claimed the credit in 2003 is as shocking as it is disturbing.

At a time that Congress continues to cut taxes for the wealthy, it is appropriate for the body to also consider ways to expand outreach and education about this underutilized, but extremely beneficial, tax credit. The EITC, if used properly and to its fullest potential, can be a critical tool in the war against poverty, and my bill does just that.

I ask my colleagues to support this measure, and I urge the leadership to bring it to the floor for consideration swiftly.

HONORING GEORGE EDWIN CHAVEZ

HON. GRACE F. NAPOLITANO

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 16, 2003

Mrs. NAPOLITANO. Mr. Speaker, I rise with great sadness today to honor the life and enormous civic contributions of my dear friend, George Edwin Chavez, who passed away from a heart attack on June 14 at the age of 66. George was a longtime resident of Whittier, California, passionate civic activist and generous friend to many.

Although he never graduated from high school, George Chavez was an inspiration to many by starting several business ventures before forming C.A.S.T. Security, Inc., in 1987, serving as its President and CEO until his death. The company provided location security services to the motion picture industry, and through the company Chavez was instrumental in introducing youth and minorities to opportunities within the motion picture industry. Chavez was the first Hispanic to do security work for the movie industry and hired countless youngsters.

While Mr. Chavez's business successes are certainly impressive, his civic contributions to the community show his true character. He was a founding member of the National Association of Latino Elected Officials (NALEO). He also served as a Field Representative for former Congressman Mathew G. Martinez and worked with the University of Southern California's School of Social Work to increase political involvement and interest among Hispanics.

Health issues and youth development were two of George Chavez's key priorities. He served on the California Board of Medical Quality Assurance and the East Los Angeles Health Task Force. He received special recognition from "Familia Unida Living with Multiple Sclerosis" for his work and contributions to assisting families and individuals living with Multiple Sclerosis. He also served on the boards of the Family School Community Partnership, Salesian Boys and Girls Club and Los Padrinos. Through C.A.S.T. Security, Inc., he also sponsored several youth softball teams.

Mr. Chavez is survived by his four daughters, Mary, Adela, Georgina, and Trisha, eight grandchildren, Richard, George, Natalie, Desiree, Christopher, Adrian, Victor, and Jasmine, and countless friends whose lives were touched by his work and service. My sincerest condolences and prayers to his beloved family and extended family. We will all miss him greatly.

FOR FREEDOM IN SOUTH ASIA

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 16, 2003

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to offer somewhat belated congratulations to the Sikh Nation on Vaisakhi Day, the anniversary of the creation of the Khalsa Panth, which occurred in April. This is a very important day in the Sikh calendar, the birthday of the Khalsa Panth.

The Khalsa Panth was created in a spirit of freedom, and this is reflected in their daily prayers in which they pray for the freedom of the Sikh Nation and the well being of all people. This freedom is an essential yearning of the human spirit and all people are entitled to freedom. Yet merely for trying to be free, the Sikhs have been oppressed by the Indian government, which has murdered more than 250,000 of them since 1984.

Against this backdrop, the Sikh Nation declared its independence on October 7, 1987, creating the new country of Khalistan. This was in a Sikh tradition of self-rule. From 1765 to 1849 Sikh ruled Punjab. They ran an inclusive government, with Hindus, Muslims, and others in high positions.

Now their dreams of freedom are being crushed by the force of 500,000 Indian troops while the Indian government tries to set up Hindutva—total Hindu domination of every aspect of the political, social, and cultural life of India, South Asia, and the people living there. One Indian Cabinet member was quoted as saying that everyone who lives in India must either be Hindu or be subservient to Hindus.

The Council of Khalistan, which leads the Sikh Nation's struggle to free its homeland, Khalistan, from Indian oppression, issued an excellent statement calling on Sikhs worldwide to use the occasion of the Sikh Nation's birthday to rededicate themselves to achieving freedom for the Sikhs in a sovereign, independent Khalistan. I would like to join in that call, Mr. Speaker. It is time to bring true freedom and democracy to South Asia. In addition, a free and sovereign Khalistan will be an American ally in the subcontinent.

We should declare our support for freedom for Khalistan and for all the other nations of South Asia that seek their freedom. And we should back this up by stopping aid to India until it learns the ways of democracy and self-determination for all peoples and nations. This is the most effective way that America, the bastion of freedom, can stand up for freedom for the oppressed peoples of South Asia.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to place the Council of Khalistan's open letter on Vaisakhi Day into the RECORD.

COUNCIL OF KHALISTAN,
Washington, DC, April 14, 2003.

VAISAKHI MESSAGE TO THE SIKH NATION

Congratulations to the Khalsa Panth on Vaisakhi Day—In Grief Sikhin Ko Deon Patshahi; Guru Gave Sovereignty to Sikh Nation, Sikh Nation Must Free Khalistan; Without Political Power, Nations Perish

DEAR KHALSA JI: WAHEGURU JIKAKHALSA, WAHEGURUJI KIATEH!

Happy Vaisakhi Day to you and your family, friends, and the Sangat. 304 years ago, Guru Gobind Singh Sahib established the Khalsa Panth, as desired by Almighty God. The Guru also gave sovereignty to the Sikh Nation. That is the reason that Sikhs always recite "Raj Kare Ga Khalsa."

Sikhs established a sovereign, independent Sikh state under the leadership of Banda Singh Bahadur from 1710 to 1716, then under the Sikh misals from 1765 until 1799 when Maharajah Ranjit Singh established Khalsa Raj in Punjab, which lasted until 1849 when the British conquered the subcontinent.

India is not a single nation. It is on the verge of disintegration. Multinational states like India historically have been doomed to disintegrate, as Austria-Hungary, the Soviet Union, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia have shown us. The Sikh Nation must do its best to establish Khalsa Raj as soon as possible. The political situation in the world is very fluid today. The Kashmir problem must be resolved through self-determination, which is the essence of democracy. As soon as Kashmir goes, India will disintegrate, as L.K. Advani forecast.

Outside Sikhs have played and must continue to play an important role in the present struggle for an independent Khalistan. They have exposed Indian government violations of basic human rights of Sikhs and other minorities. They have internationalized the Sikh struggle for an independent Khalistan. They have also preserved Sikh history by documenting major events since 1984 in the Congressional Record.

Three million Sikhs live outside of India. They constitute a major political force in many democratic countries, including the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, and others. I appeal to all Sikhs to get involved in the political process to preserve their interests in their home countries. Secure the help of political parties and officials to help free Khalistan and to preserve Sikh interests in your respective countries and also to help protect the Sikhs back in Punjab, Khalistan. Every Sikh must become a citizen of the country where he or she lives and become part of the political process. Only by becoming politically active will Sikhs be able to achieve our objectives of a free Khalistan and preserve our interests in our adopted countries.

The next generations of Sikhs are citizens of these adopted countries. They were born there and they are going to stay. They must play a very constructive role in the political, social, and economic life of the country. Make sure that our children are very well educated. There should not be any Sikh child, boy or girl, who does not have at least an undergraduate university degree. Make sure that your sons and your daughters are well educated. Make sure they get the best education that they can. Only by educating our women will we secure a better future for the Sikh Nation and for our coming generations.

Remember that the Sikh Nation must free our Sikh homeland, Punjab, Khalistan. Without political power nations perish. It is essential for the survival of the Sikh Nation.

Colonial rule was better for everyone in India except the Brahmins than Indian rule is. We have been victimized by repression,

tyranny, discrimination, and other abuses of our basic, god-given rights. India has used genocide, murder, torture, rape, and everything in its arsenal to destroy the Sikh Nation. It has even blown up its own airliner to blame it on the Sikhs, as the book *Soft Target*, written by two Canadian journalists, proves beyond a doubt. They paid former Punjab governor Surendra Nath \$1.5 billion to foment and support terrorism in Punjab and Kashmir.

The present Sikh leadership is dishonest, corrupt, and completely under Indian control. They are complicit in the crimes of the Indian regime. The book *Chakravatyuh: Web of Indian Secularism* by Professor Gurtej Singh shows their complicity. They connived with the Indian government before the Golden Temple invasion to murder Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, General Shahab Singh, and thousands of other good Sikhs who were working for Sikh freedom. The Indian government has murdered over 250,000 Sikhs since 1984. The death sentence given to Professor Devinder Pal Singh Bhullar based on a false confession is the latest example of India's effort to eliminate the Sikh religion and intimidate the Sikh Nation.

According to a report by the Movement Against State Repression (MASR), 52,268 Sikhs are being held as political prisoners in India without charge or trial. Some have been in illegal custody since 1984! Yet Chief Minister Amarinder Singh denies that there are any political prisoners at all. Have they murdered them all? The Indian regime paid over 41,000 cash bounties to police officers for killing Sikhs, according to a 1994 report from the U.S. State Department. Will the Indian government publish the names of those Sikhs who were murdered by those police officials to get rewards? On October 7, 1987, the Sikh Nation declared the independence of its homeland, Punjab, Khalistan. No Sikh representative has ever signed the Indian constitution.

The Sikh nation has awakened. I call on all Sikhs to support the Khalsa Panchayat. These good Sikhs forced Jathedar Manjit Singh of Kesgarh to resign. Now Jathedar Vedanti must resign along with him. Please help the Khalsa Panchayat in these efforts. And work to build a party that will lead a Shantmai Morcha to liberate our homeland, Khalistan, from Indian occupation. Just as the Akalis took control from the Mahants of the last century, we must take control of our future from the new Mahants, the present Akali leadership and Indian-controlled Jathedars. We must liberate our homeland.

Only in a free Khalistan will the Sikh Nation prosper. Only then will the Sikh Nation get justice. India must start acting like a democracy and allow self-determination in the form of a free and fair plebiscite on independence for Punjab, Khalistan and the other nations seeking their freedom from India. Let us join hands to secure our freedom, for future generations and ourselves.

Panth Da Sewadar,

Dr. GURMIT SINGH AULAKH,
President,
Council of Khalistan.

TRIBUTE TO THE SEVENTH MICHIGAN VOLUNTEER INFANTRY

HON. MIKE ROGERS

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 16, 2003

Mr. ROGERS of Michigan. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to the Seventh Michigan Volunteer Infantry for their courageous ef-

forts in the Civil War that aided in the preservation of the Union, especially at Fredericksburg, Virginia.

In December of 1862, during the battle of Fredericksburg, the Union faced fierce opposition on the Rappahannock River and was forced to send men across the river to secure the Union's position. Members of the Seventh Michigan Volunteer Infantry from Ingham County were among the daring men who risked their lives that cold December day. Under heavy fire, the Seventh Infantry paddled across the river and successfully flushed Confederate riflemen from their shelter. Their bravery is forever remembered in Michigan's state anthem, "My Michigan, My Michigan."

More than 140 years later, on December 11, 2003, the Seventh Michigan Volunteer Infantry is being honored with a monument that is to be placed in Fredericksburg, Virginia. This monument is to remember the bold and daring efforts put forth by the Seventh Infantry throughout the Civil War. Their efforts held this nation together amidst a time of national divide and struggle.

The Seventh Michigan Volunteer Infantry has earned this place in our nation's history. In such a pivotal moment, the Seventh Infantry demonstrated bravery, determination and patriotism. They made their home state and their nation proud.

Mr. Speaker, I wish to extend the gratitude of myself and the entire nation to the Seventh Michigan Volunteer Infantry for their courage in the battle of Fredericksburg. I ask my colleagues to join me in recognizing their place in history and their part in restoring the Union.

TRIBUTE TO MR. MARVIN BARRISH

HON. ROBERT A. BRADY

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, July 16, 2003

Mr. BRADY of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor the accomplishments and contributions of Mr. Marvin Barrish. It is a privilege to recognize a person whose personal triumph over injury pales in comparison to his triumphs for the disabled community.

Mr. Barrish is a former owner of five Center City newsstands and a former distinguished dancer whose talent led to an appearance in the movie "Rocky II". Tragically, in 1980, Mr. Barrish was shot in the back, paralyzing him from the waist down. He endured months of therapy only to concede to his inability to ever walk again.

Regardless of this physical setback, Marvin Barrish was determined to continue living abundantly and vivaciously. He underwent a grueling training regimen in order to compete in the 16-mile "Walk-a-thon" for the March of Dimes. He also appeared at the Philadelphia First Union Spectrum for the half time show of the Villanova-Georgetown game where he performed his "heel chair rockin'." Now his appearances cover a broad range of benefit performances for Philadelphia Children's Hospital, Shriners' Hospital, The Special Olympics, The United Cerebral Palsy Foundation, and the United Negro College Fund, just to name a few.

He has, accordingly, been acknowledged for his contributions to the community by both the